

Society, Paumotu, and Marquesas Islands and appendages (2 genera peculiar); and (5) *the Central Coral-group*, containing the Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice, and other islands. These divisions are briefly discussed and described. We regret that no map of them is given, as that would have rendered the author's arguments much more easily intelligible.

The Catalogue has been prepared at Dresden under the ægis of Dr. A. B. Meyer, whose kind assistance is fully acknowledged. But the Museums of Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Leyden, and London have also been visited for the consultation of types. It would have been of great advantage if the author had stated in each case whether he had examined those types, and, indeed, whether he had personally examined specimens of the species at all. In fact, we should have preferred more notes and less synonymy. But we are thankful to Mr. Wigglesworth for what appears to us to be a very useful piece of work, so far as it goes.

XXXIX.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed to the Editor:—

SIR,—On November 3rd, 1891, I received a pair of Bustard-Quails (of what species I was then ignorant) from Mr. A. Jamrach, who informed me that he had obtained them from India. By the loan of a skin on November 19th, I was enabled to identify them as *Turnix nigricollis* of Madagascar*.

The following notes I transcribe almost *verbatim* from my note-books:—"December 18, 1891. The Black-throated *Turnices* thrive, and the large and more brightly coloured one, which I believe to be a female, occasionally makes a sort of incipient 'boom,' *parva componere magnis*, somewhat resembling the 'drum' of the female Emeu.

* "Black-necked Bustard Quail," J. Sibree, *Ibis*, 1891, pp. 562, 563: *Turnix nigricollis* (Gm.), Ogilvie Grant, *Ibis*, 1889, pp. 471, 472, et op. cit. 1892, pp. 346, 347.

“March 25, 1892. The Madagascar Bush Quails are noisy; the note of the female differs very considerably from that of *Turnix sylvatica*; the male has a short purring chuckle.

“April 13, 1892. The Bush Quails have an egg, not much resembling that of ‘Torillo’ = *T. sylvatica*. April 20. Another egg laid, but no sign of nesting. One egg was cracked, so we removed both.

“April 26. The Bush Quail laid another egg, which was found broken to pieces this morning. I placed these birds in a larger cage and removed them to a quiet place, with a good supply of dry moss, and on May 4 they had made a nest and laid two eggs, to which a third was added on the 5th, but so far as I could ascertain neither bird sat steadily on the eggs, and all three were eventually broken.” I believe that in a larger cage, partially darkened and never disturbed, we might have had some eggs hatched, but the birds were so constantly restless, and so easily frightened, that the cleaning of the cage and supplying food and water prevented them from sitting successfully, and also prevented our ascertaining which of the birds, if either, attempted incubation. I gave two of the eggs to Professor A. Newton, and one to Lieut.-Col. Ed. Butler.

I am, Sir,

Yours &c.,

June 16th, 1892.

LILFORD.

P.S.—Since I wrote this letter my bird-keeper has told me that he *did* on May 4th detect the male bird on the two eggs, so there is little doubt that it is the male of this species that undertakes the duty of incubation.

SIR,—In my Catalogue of the Parrots (p. 302) I have mentioned in a footnote *Chrysotis hecki* (Rehnw.), and given as a description a translation of Reichenow's original one (Journ. f. Orn. 1891, p. 211). As I was not autoptically acquainted with this bird, the only remark I made about it was that the dull rose tinge of the feathers of the pileum and nape seemed to ally this species to *C. lilacina* (Less.) from Guayaquil.

In the last October number of the 'Journal für Ornithologie,' received only yesterday, there is a coloured figure of *C. hecki*, and after having seen it I have very little doubt about the specific identity of *C. hecki* with *C. lilacina*. According to my ideas, the type of the former, which is a living bird in the Zoological Gardens of Berlin, is merely an older and more fully coloured bird of the same species as that in the British Museum from Western Ecuador, which I described as *C. lilacina*.

Yours &c.,

T. SALVADORI.

Turin, Zoological Museum,
21st March, 1892.

SIR,—In reply to your inquiries I can state that there are still two places in Holland where the Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) breeds every year. One of these is the Naarder Meer, situated near the town of Naarden, in North Holland; the other is the Zwancuwater, situated on the west coast near the town of IJelder. In both these places these birds are carefully preserved by the owners, so that no eggs are now allowed to be taken, and the nesting-places can be visited only by special arrangement.

The result of these measures is that the Spoonbills have of late years increased in numbers, and there is now every prospect that these interesting birds will be preserved to Western Europe for many years to come. The older nesting-places at Nieuwer-kerk, between Rotterdam and Utrecht (*cf.* Gould's 'Birds of Great Britain,' vol. iv., text to pl. 32), and in the Horster Meer near Overmeer an de Vecht (*cf.* 'Ibis,' 1877, p. 412), are both deserted in consequence of the drainage of the water.

Yours &c.,

F. E. BLAAUW.

s' Graveland, Hilversum,
Holland, May 27th, 1892.

[Dr. C. Kerbert, Director of the Gardens of the Royal Zoological Society of Amsterdam, also asks us, in order to prevent disappointment, to caution English ornithologists that it is no longer permitted to disturb the Spoonbills in their breeding-places by visiting them during the breeding-season.—EDITOR.]

SIR,—In accordance with your kind invitation, I write to call the attention of ornithologists to a fact concerning the distribution of the Sun-bird of Palestine (*Nectarinia osee*) which seems to have escaped the notice of most authorities. In Canon Tristram's work on the 'Flora and Fauna of Palestine,' p. 64, he states that this bird has not been observed (at least to his knowledge) any further north than Carmel. Now I have repeatedly seen and taken specimens of both sexes, young as well as adults, at Beyrout, where it is a fairly common visitant in winter and spring; indeed, it is no unusual occurrence to see one or two at a time in my own little garden, whenever there is a climbing bean in flower or some similar attraction, although my house is near the centre of the town, in a noisy and crowded quarter. I *suspect*, though I cannot prove it, that the bird even breeds in the vicinity of Beyrout occasionally.

I am, Sir,

Beyrout, Syria,
May 1892.

Yours &c.,

W. T. VAN DYCK, M.D.

SIR,—I beg leave to call your attention to a remarkable coincidence, showing how the same errors may be independently propagated in two quarters. In the last number of the 'Records of the Australian Museum,' published at Sydney in April, Professor Newton appears to imply (though his sentence, being ungrammatical, might possibly be interpreted otherwise) that I have repeated a statement of Temminck's that the Sanderling occurs in the Sunda Islands and New Guinea. He seems to suggest that my remark that the Sanderling is a winter visitor to the islands of the Malay Archipelago is an unverified generalization from Temminck.

Curiously enough, in the last number of the 'Aves Hawaiianenses,' published in this country in May, Mr. Scott Wilson repeats the same charges in a very similar sentence, giving the same references and falling into the same errors.

I based my statement upon four skins: one in the Leyden Museum, obtained in Java about 1826; two in the same Museum, collected on the same island in 1862; and a fourth

in the British Museum, obtained on the Tampussuk River, in N.W. Borneo, by Mr. Pretyman about 1881.

In spite of Professor Newton's implied statement that the Sanderling was not found in Borneo by Everett, there is an example in the British Museum obtained by him on Baram Point, and already duly recorded (Everett, *Ibis*, 1890, p. 465), so that Mr. Scott Wilson is further in error in saying that my statement is not borne out by recent experience.

Further comment is unnecessary.

Yours &c.,

HENRY SEEBOHM.

Horton Grange, Maidenhead,
21st June, 1892.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA at Delagoa Bay.—In Mrs. Monteiro's lately published volume on her experiences at Delagoa Bay, she writes (p. 47) as follows:—

"It was in the beginning of March, and the rain had poured in torrents all night, and continued the whole of the next day, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane, the thermometer suddenly dropping to 63°. About 11 A.M. a drenched miserable Swallow flew into the house and perched himself on one of the partitions of the rooms; then one flew into the kitchen, and my boy caught it and brought it to me. I held the poor mite in my hands for a little while, to warm him, and then let him fly up to his companion in misfortune, by whose side he at once nestled down. In a few minutes more began to come in, at first singly, then by twos and threes, some fluttering helplessly among the white window-curtains and beating themselves against the glass. These I caught and let fly up to their friends, and was surprised to find that they were not in the least alarmed at being touched, but seemed to like the warmth of the hand, and would perch quite confidently on my finger, and not attempt to move when I stroked their little heads.

"Many were brought me half dead by women and boys, who had picked them up from the ground, and who all wanted a 'pen' (threepence) for them; but for answer I

only pointed to my fast-filling house, so they laughed and let me keep the birds, which soon recovered in the dry room. One poor little thing I found suspended in a large spider's web, and, although the wings of a Swallow seem so powerful, it was quite unable to extricate itself. They continued to come in all day, and before 5 o'clock more than a hundred had taken shelter, and the twittering and fuss that went on were most amusing. When it began to grow dark they packed themselves up for the night on the partitions as close as they could possibly crowd together, two and three deep. Most of them went to roost with their tails spread out, perhaps in order to dry them thoroughly, and the round white spot on the tip of each feather had a very curious appearance when they were all asleep and quiet. I fully expected to find the bottom row dead from suffocation the next morning, but only three had fallen victims, and these I immediately skinned. They stayed with me till about noon, one or two occasionally flying out and returning, apparently to report on the state of the weather, and then all leisurely took their departure, no doubt very glad to see the sun again shining brightly. I felt quite sorry when my little visitors departed, but was glad they chose their countrywoman's house in their time of need, for they proved to be English Swallows."

Bird-notes from Mogador.—Mr. C. A. Payton, who writes from Mogador, Morocco, May 13th, under the well-known *nom de plume* of "Sarcelle," tells us ('Field,' 1892, p. 811) as follows:—"Knots (*Tringa canutus*), in rich russet summer plumage, have been arriving here in large flights during the past three days, and pursuing a northward migration, after a good halt for food on the muddy plain outside the Mogador market-gardens, recently partly submerged by spring tides. I have secured some good specimens of these interesting Arctic-breeding birds, which were feeding in company with large numbers of Ringed Plover (*Egialitis hiaticula*) and Grey Plover (*Squatarola helvetica*), many of them already black-breasted, sundry Sandpipers, a small party of Greenshank (*Totanus canescens*), and a variety of

Terns. Of the Knots I had no previous record here in the month of May, but had shot them in February, March, August (stragglers), September, October, and November. They were in very good condition, and the rich ruddy breasts and variegated backs were extremely beautiful."

Ornithologists Abroad.—Mr. Arthur H. Holland has returned to the Argentine Republic, and settled himself in a new estancia, called "Media Luna," about 40 miles south of Soler, on the Ferro-carril al Pacifico. We have already heard from him on the subject of birds, and have no doubt that, as before, he is devoting all his spare time to Natural History. Herr Ernst Hartert, having completed his catalogue of Cypselidæ and Caprimulgidæ for the British Museum, and written us a valuable paper on the birds of East Prussia, has left Europe for a year's collecting-tour in Venezuela. We fear he has selected a rather troublous time, as the Venezuelans are in the throes of a revolution; but a traveller of such experience both in India and Africa will know full well how to take care of himself.

Dr. Bowdler Sharpe informs us that he has already received a small supplementary collection from Mr. Charles Hose, containing further spoils of Mount Dulit in Borneo, and that he will give us an account of them in the next number of 'The Ibis.'

The first consignment of specimens from Nyassaland collected for Mr. Commissioner Johnston by his Naturalist, Mr. Alexander Whyte, F.Z.S., has already reached this country. There are some 150 birds amongst them. Mr. Johnston writes from "The Residency, Zomba, British Central Africa," on March 27th last, to say that he was then just sending off a second consignment of specimens, illustrative of the Fauna and Flora of the Shiré Highlands, a good proportion of it being from the Milangi and Zomba mountains, ranging from 4000 to 8000 feet above the sea-level. As the birds of this district are as yet quite unknown, the results of the examination of these collections will be of great interest to ornithologists.

Lieut. H. E. Barnes has unfortunately met with an accident at Aden, having injured his hand, and has been sent back to India for the better recovery of his health. He forwards us some birdskins, about which he was uncertain, for identification, and promises notes on about 120 species observed or obtained in the neighbourhood of Aden for our next number.

Colius and Hypocolius.—Living examples of *Colius* and *Hypocolius* are now together in the Zoological Society's Parrot-house. Of course they have nothing to do with one another, *Hypocolius ampelinus* being a typical Oscinine bird and *Colius* an abnormal Picarian; but it is interesting to see them side by side. The Colies (*Colius capensis*) have commenced to breed, and two of them sit upon several eggs in the same nest. The *Hypocolii* consist of a fine adult male, presented by Mr. W. D. Cumming of Fao in 1890, and a pair lately received from the same kind donor. The male of the latter is now paying his addresses to the female, and twists his wings and feathers about in a remarkable way, which is well worthy of inspection.

New Extinct Rail.—The 'Christchurch Press' of the 28th March last, of which a copy has been sent to us, gives an account of the expedition of Mr. H. O. Forbes, of the Canterbury Museum, to the Chatham Islands, and of his discovery of additional remains of the large extinct Rail, which he has proposed to call *Aphanapteryx hawkinsi*, after Mr. W. Hawkins, an old resident in the island, who obtained the first specimen*. Mr. Forbes went to Chatham Island on the 21st of January last, accompanied by Mr. Hawkins, and obtained a set of remains of this Rail sufficient to enable a restoration of most of its skeleton to be made. Mr. Forbes is of opinion that this Rail is a close ally of *Aphanapteryx broeckii* of Mauritius, "differing mainly in size," and goes into various speculations on the "disrupted distribution of the genus," supposing this to be the case. Whether

* See 'Nature' of March 5th and April 21st, 1892.

Mr. Forbes is right on this point is perhaps doubtful, but the discovery of this new extinct bird is one of great interest.

Recent Researches in Fossil Birds.—Under this heading will be found an article in the last number of 'Natural Science' which deserves the close attention of ornithologists. It contains an account of some very remarkable discoveries in the Lower Tertiaries of South America recently made by Prof. Ameghino and by Messrs. Moreno and Mercerat. The fossil remains obtained by Prof. Ameghino are said to indicate the former existence of birds of a "totally abnormal type, and larger than any hitherto known, by the side of which Moas may be regarded as dwarfs." In the memoir of Messrs. Moreno and Mercerat ("Los Pájaros Fósiles de la República Argentina") figures are stated to be given of a large number of other gigantic extinct flightless birds of the Lower Tertiaries of Argentina, which are referred to no less than nine distinct genera and to a new Order, "Stereornithes." There seems, however, to be much doubt about the validity of some of the conclusions arrived at, and we urge that, having regard to the undoubted importance of these discoveries, some European paleontologist well versed in the determination of fossil bones should be directed to proceed to Buenos Ayres and give us the benefit of his judgment upon the subject.

Anniversary Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1892.—The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union was held at the rooms of the Zoological Society of London, 3 Hanover Square, on Wednesday, the 18th of May, at 6 P.M., Mr. PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., in the Chair. The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting having been read and confirmed, the Report of the Committee was read. It stated that one Honorary Member (Herr A. v. Pelzeln) and two Ordinary Members (Col. Sir Oliver St. John and Mr. E. W. Harcourt) of the Union had died during the year, and that four Ordinary

Members had resigned, viz. the Earl of Antrim, Major Becher, R.A., Baron von Hügel, and Mr. C. H. T. Marshall.

The number of the Members of the Union at the close of 1891 was therefore 250, consisting of 220 Ordinary, 1 Extraordinary, 9 Honorary, and 20 Foreign Members. There were 18 Candidates for the Ordinary Membership.

The accounts for the year 1891 were then presented by the Secretary, and approved by the Meeting.

The following Ordinary Members were balloted for and declared to be duly elected :—

E. C. Stewart Baker, District Superintendent of Police,
North Cachar.

The Rev. Maurice C. H. Bird, M.A., Brunstead Rectory,
Stalham, Norfolk.

William E. Brooks, Mount Forest, Ontario, Canada.

Charles William Campbell, H.M. Consular Service,
China.

Harold Mitchell Courage, Snowdenham, Bramley, Guild-
ford.

John David Dignes de la Touche, Chinese Imperial
Maritime Customs.

William George Fairbridge, Capetown.

Frank Finn, B.A., F.Z.S., Mote House, Mote Road,
Maidstone.

John Gerrard, Government Inspector of Mines, Wake-
field.

Edward Suter Hasell, Victoria, British Columbia.

Henry Ashworth James, Kingswood, Watford, Herts.

Francis Arnold Knight, Brynmelyn, Weston-super
Mare.

Thomas Geddes Laidlaw, Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh,
and 8 Morningside Road.

Arthur Moore Laws, Little Clacton Lodge, near Col-
chester.

Dr. St. George Mivart, F.R.S., F.Z.S., Hurstcote, Chil-
worth, Surrey.

Philip Winchester Munn, Laverstoke, Whitechurch,
Hants.

Fergus Menteith Ogilvie, M.A., F.Z.S., Sizewell House,
Leiston, Suffolk.

William Henry Turle, Newton Stacey, Stockbridge,
Hants.

The outgoing President and Secretary were then re-elected, and Mr. Osbert Salvin was chosen into the Committee in the place of Mr. Howard Saunders, who had retired therefrom.

The Officers for the year 1892-93 are therefore as follows:—

President.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LILFORD.

Secretary.

F. D. GODMAN, Esq., F.R.S.

Editor.

P. L. SCLATER, Esq., M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S.

Committee.

DR. R. BOWDLER SHARPE.

HENRY SEEBOHM, Esq.

OSBERT SALVIN, Esq., M.A., F.R.S.

After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the Meeting adjourned.

The Annual Dinner, subsequently held at the Café Royal, was attended by twenty-eight Members and guests.

After the Dinner a proposition was made that an Ornithological Club should be formed for the purpose of holding monthly meetings, at which papers should be read and specimens exhibited. A Committee, consisting of the Earl of Gainsborough, Mr. Seebohm, Mr. Howard Saunders, Mr. Bidwell, and Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, was appointed to consider the advisability of carrying out the proposed scheme.